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Boston University

News & Notes

Boston University School of Medicine



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MMEDIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTED IN NEJM AND AT AAMC PANEL

The Modular Medical Integrated Curriculum (MMEDIC) program, a unique eight-year program of BUSM and the University's College of Liberal Arts, has successfully enabled Boston University students to pursue an enriched liberal arts education while "decompressing" the strenuous first year of medical school, according to an in-depth article in the June 17 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine.

The program, which began in 1977 and is funded by the Commonwealth Fund, is designed to provide students with a more gradual transition into the School of Medicine's rigorous curriculum by integrating the last two years of undergraduate education with the first year of medical school. It is one of six pathways to the M.D. degree offered at BUSM.

"The success of the MMEDIC program demonstrates clearly that the continuum of premedical and medical education, which has been changed relatively little in the last several decades, can be improved," Dean Sandson said. "It is our goal to produce a physician who is not only skilled in the science of medicine but who is humanistic, compassionate and committed to continuing to learn."

The study of the first two groups of 15 MMEDIC students to complete their first year at BUSM showed that early admission to medical school produced a positive change in students' attitudes toward their undergraduate education and enhanced their educational experience by allowing them to choose courses on the basis of their educational quality and relevance. The decompressed first-year curriculum of the MMEDIC program has reduced the anxiety commonly felt by first-year medical students, according to the report, which was written by Dean Sandson, Arthur J. Culbert, Ph.D., assistant to the dean, and Ernest H. Blaustein, Ph.D., associate dean of the CLA.

Culbert also recently discussed the MMEDIC program before an Association of American Medical Colleges panel on the "General Professional Education of the Physician and College Preparation for Medicine." He served as a spokesperson for BUSM and five other universities that have programs similar to the MMEDIC program. He also spoke on "Atypical Pathways for Medical Education: The Commonwealth Experience of Early Assurance" before the AAMC Northeast Group of Student Affairs in Montreal.

UNIVERSITY OFFERS BAY STATE HEALTH CARE PLAN TO EMPLOYEES

Bay State Health Care, the newest form of employee health-care insurance to be offered by Boston University, is now available to all nonrepresented faculty and staff members. Open enrollment for the plan, which is offered as an alternative to the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Master Medical plan and the Harvard Community Health Plan, will continue until Sept. 17.

Bay State Health Care is a health maintenance organization (HMO). The prepaid medical plan is designed to encourage preventive medicine and routine health care, and to provide comprehensive and accessible health-care services at reasonable costs. In a recent letter to employees announcing the plan, University President John R. Silber said, "(Bay State) offers benefit levels that are comparable to Blue Cross/Blue Shield and the Harvard Community Health Plan at a cost which is less than the two current plans." Employee contribution rates for the Bay State plan are: individual--weekly, \$4.97; monthly, \$21.55; family--weekly, \$10.75; monthly, \$46.60.

Bay State Health Care is an HMO organized as a "independent practice association," in which subscribers choose their own local physician, dentist or specialist from a list of more than 1,200 professionals who participate in the program. Because Bay State Health professionals work out of their own offices, subscribers to the plan receive individualized care at the location of their choice. Bay State subscribers are also covered for inpatient and outpatient services offered by their physicians' affiliated hospitals.

Many physicians with offices at Boston University Medical Center are participating physicians in Bay State Health Care. Included among these physicians are senior faculty members in primary care medicine and many of the medical specialties.

Bay State Health Care covers such health measures as routine checkups and immunizations, eye and ear exams, well baby care, home health services, family planning, treatment of drug abuse and alcoholism, as well as diagnostic testing, such as x-rays and lab tests. Bay State provides for an unlimited hospitalization benefit in a licensed general hospital. Emergency care is covered 24 hours a day and includes worldwide protection in the event of sudden and serious illness. Except for a \$3 copayment per office visit, virtually all health-care costs are covered. There is no waiting period for receiving any of the benefits.

Permanent, nonrepresented employees who work at least 75 percent of full time are eligible for the Bay State plan. There are no age limitations for Bay State coverage for Boston University employees. Family coverage includes spouse and any unmarried children up to age 19 (or to age 26 if the child is an eligible full-time student).

During the current enrollment period for the Bay State plan, Office of Personnel and Bay State representatives are conducting informational meetings on both University campuses. The remaining meetings will be: Sept. 2, starting at 10 a.m., Personnel, 25 Buick St., 2nd floor, Charles River Campus; Sept. 7, 2 to 4 p.m., School of Nursing, Rm. 202, Charles River Campus; Sept. 8, 10 a.m., L-112, BUSM; Sept. 14, 6 p.m., George Sherman Union, Conference Auditorium, Charles River Campus.

The next enrollment for Bay State and the other health-insurance plans will in the Spring. For more information, Charles River Campus employees should call the Benefits Staff in the Office of Personnel, at 353-4487, and employees at the Medical Campus should call 247-6025.

FORMER ASSISTANT DEAN
OSLER DIES AT AGE 73

Leonard D. Osler, M.D., a former professor of neurology and assistant dean of BUSM, recently died of an apparent coronary at 73.

Born in England, Osler received his medical degree in 1939 from Cambridge University Medical School. After training at St. Thomas' Hospital, serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, studying at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, England, he moved to the United States to take a position at University Hospital. In 1955, he was appointed an instructor at BUSM, where he edited a BUSM publication, the Boston Medical Quarterly. In 1964, Osler served as acting assistant dean of the School of Medicine, and in 1971, he was made a full professor of neurology. He retired shortly thereafter and returned to England.

BLACK AND HAMMER PARTICIPATE
IN CANCER PANEL MEETING

Paul H. Black, M.D., director of the Humphrey Cancer Research Center, was one of eight panelists to take part in a recent open meeting of the President's Cancer Panel, which focused on the "Review and Funding of Grant Applications Submitted to the National Cancer Institute." Businessman philanthropist Armand Hammer, M.D., one of three recipients of the 1982 Humphrey Center Awards, is chairman of the panel. He and Vincent Devita, M.D., director of the NCI, were principal speakers at the meeting, held at Harvard School of Public Health.

BANTAM PUBLISHES BUMC
'HEART RISK BOOK'

Boston University Medical Center's Heart Risk Book, a practical guide to preventing heart disease, was published in June by Bantam Books. The book was written by Aram V. Chobanian, M.D., a professor of medicine and director of the University's Cardiovascular Institute, and Lorraine W. Loviglio, an award-winning medical writer and former editor for academic affairs at the School. Patrick O'Reilly, administrator for the Institute, assisted in the project.

The Heart Risk Book details ways to maintain cardiovascular fitness, describing risk factors that can lead to heart attack and stroke and the advances being made at BUMC in dealing with these problems. Subjects covered include hypertension, cholesterol, obesity, salt and blood pressure, genetic and environmental factors, oral contraceptives and estrogens, as well as the warning signs of stroke. Diagnostic techniques and treatment methods also are discussed. The paperback book is an expanded version of a special issue of Bostonia, the University's alumni magazine. That issue, which appeared in 1978 under the title "What's Your Risk?," was honored for making "an outstanding contribution to public education" by the Greater Boston Chapter of the American Heart Association.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS
RICHARD TALAMO DIES

Pediatrician Richard C. Talamo, M.D., who last spring was awarded a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the BUSM Alumni Association, died of cancer on July 23 at age 47. A professor of pediatrics at Tufts New England Medical Center, Talamo was a member of the BUSM Class of '61. Talamo had been cited by the Alumni Association for his exemplary career in pediatrics. In addition to a long association with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Talamo was a member of numerous professional organizations. He is survived by his wife, Barbara; two sons, Jonathan and David; a daughter, Anna; his parents, Abbee and Gertrude; and a sister, Ruth Green.

HPI RECEIVES PREVENTIVE
MEDICINE CURRICULUM GRANT

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich., recently awarded the Center for Educational Development in Health of the University's Health Policy Institute a \$1.3 million grant for the continuing development of a national model curriculum in preventive medicine.

The HPI will collaborate with the Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine on the four-year project. The program will focus on developing educational materials for undergraduate medical education and curricula for graduate nurse education, physician residency and physician continuing education programs.

The project started in 1977 with support from the Kellogg Foundation and the National Fund for Medical Education. The materials developed so far cover preventive techniques applicable to heart disease. Future materials may include alcoholism, breast cancer and an infectious disease, according to Hammalore Vanderschmidt, Ph.D., associate director of the Center and a co-principal investigator for the project along with Center director Ascher J. Segall, M.D., M.P.H., a professor of epidemiology at BUSM.

JOSEPH STOKES RECEIVES
FIVE-YEAR GRANT

Joseph Stokes, M.D., a professor of medicine and a member of the Section of Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology of the Division of Medicine, has been granted a five-year \$340,834 Preventive Cardiology Academic Award from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of Bethesda, Md. The award, aimed at improving the teaching of heart disease prevention, will permit Stokes to devote half of his time to such teaching for a five-year period, which began in July.

John McCahan, M.D., associate dean for curriculum at BUSM, has appointed an ad hoc Heart Disease Prevention Curriculum Committee that is currently making an inventory of existing teaching at BUSM related to the prevention of heart disease. The committee expects to recommend ways of improving the teaching of preventive cardiology to the Curriculum Committee next spring.

As another part of the project, Stokes will adapt modular teaching materials currently being developed by the Center for Educational Development in Health at Boston University (see preceding story) to the teaching of clinical preventive medicine at BUSM. He also is working with members of the faculty of the Section of General Internal Medicine of the Department of Medicine and of BUSM's School of Public Health in developing a Joint Residency Program in Primary Care and Preventive Medicine for physicians wishing to receive training in both disciplines.

Stokes and his associates also hope to develop curricula for patients with coronary heart disease, hypertension, rheumatic heart disease and for parents of children with congenital heart disease in order to improve the effectiveness of patient care and to encourage their more efficient use of health services. Persons at the Medical Center who wish to participate or to obtain more information should contact Ms. Ellen Yadon at DOB-600 (Doctor's Office Building, 720 Harrison Avenue, Suite 1105, Boston, MA, 02118) or call her at x5022 (247-5022).

LINDA KRAUS AWARDED GRANT
AT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE PROGRAM

Linda Johnston Kraus, Ph.D., a research associate in neurology, recently received a \$12,000 award from the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association of Massachusetts to do research on immune function in Alzheimer's disease. She received the grant at the organization's first annual luncheon meeting June 29 in Boston. F. Marott Sinex, Ph.D., a professor of biochemistry, is president of the organization. The keynote speaker was Nancy L. Mace, M.A., author of The 36-Hour Day, a family guide to caring for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

MAURICE COSTIN DIES
AT AGE 64; WAS ACTIVE AT FUH

Maurice Costin, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of surgery and a staff member at Framingham Union Hospital for 35 years, died recently at the age of 64. A New Hampshire native, Costin was a member of several professional organizations and in community health-care activities. He is survived by his wife, Jeanne (Gauthier); his children: Maurice Jr., Michael, Patrick, Sally, and Susan Costin Adams; a sister, Patricia Costin Jones; and a brother, Paul. Donations in his memory may be sent to the Boston University-Framingham Heart Study, 118 Lincoln Street, Framingham, MA, 01701.

DAY-LONG PROGRAM HELD
FOR BOARD OF VISITORS

Tours of the Naval Blood Research Laboratory, the Biofeedback Clinic at UH and the Hospital's Respiratory Care Center were among the highlights of a day-long program for the School of Medicine's Board of Visitors June 22 at BUSM.

Among those who made presentations for the Board: Aram V. Chobanian, M.D., a professor of medicine and director of the University's Cardiovascular Institute; Charles P. Tifft, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine; Robert E. Leach, M.D., chairman of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery; Janina R. Galler, M.D., a professor of psychiatry; Richard Myers, Ph.D., an assistant professor of neurology; and May Long, coordinator of the Massachusetts Committee to Combat Huntington's Disease. A slide-tape program, "The History of Boston City Hospital," was presented by John J. Byrne, M.D., a professor of medicine.

Twenty-one BUSM students were among those who attended a luncheon held for the Board members in Hiebert Lounge. Speakers for the afternoon activities included Dean Sandson, Daniel S. Bernstein, M.D., associate dean of resources and hospital affiliations, Catharine Cook, director of Development, and Elihu Rose, Ph.D., chairman of the Board.

STUDY SAYS SPERMICIDES
NOT RELATED TO BIRTH DEFECTS

The use of vaginal spermicides by women does not increase the overall risk of serious birth defects, said a report by the Drug Epidemiology Unit of the School of Public Health published in the May 7 Journal of the American Medical Association. The report, which contradicts previous findings, analyzed data of 50,282 pregnant women who had been using vaginal spermicides as a means of birth control when they became pregnant. A total of 6.5 percent of their

offspring had at least one congenital malformation, and of these, 2.2 percent had major malformations involving a threat to life, major surgery or a functional or serious cosmetic impairment. To ensure reliability of the data, other possible risk factors were identified and tested against control groups of children without birth defects. The overall rates of major malformations were similar in exposed and non-exposed children. The data also was analyzed in terms of the kinds of spermicides used, how close to delivery they were used, and the uniformity of the congenital malformations.

Four specific birth defects that had accounted for the previously reported increase in the risk of major malformations--absence of limb or part of a limb, tumors, Down's syndrome and hypospadias--did not occur in excess in the present study. However, larger numbers of children need to be studied to ensure that spermicides do not increase the risk of these defects, according to the report, which was written by Samuel Shapiro, M.B., F.R.C.P.(E), and the late Dennis Slone, M.D., research professors of epidemiology and co-directors of the DEU, and Olli P. Heinonen, M.D., M.Sc. The DEU is supported by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health and pharmaceutical firms.

NEWS & NOTES is a regular monthly publication of the Office of Informational Services. If you have news of interest to the School of Medicine community, call Marge Dwyer at x5606 (247-5606), or write to her at the Office of Informational Services, DOB-600 (720 Harrison Ave., Boston, MA 02118).

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